



***SPEED***

***CORRESPONDENCE***

by.....

## DIRECT FLOW

- Route to action office first
- Use copy for joint action
- Organize for direct delivery



①

## LESS CONTROL

- Deliver mail unopened
- Reduce quantity recorded
- Simplify controls



②

## ACCURATE ASSIGNMENT

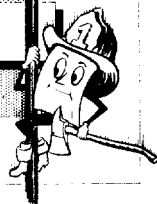
- Define who gets what
- Specify reply points
- Strengthen routing guide



③

## PROMPT PREPARATION

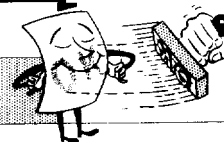
- Set reply time limits
- Follow up in action office
- Use pre-planned replies



④

## PROMPT APPROVAL

- Reduce rewrites
- Limit clearances, reviews
- Delegate signing authority



⑤

**THE  
4-S  
FORMULA**

**FOR  
shortness**

**C O R R E S P O N D E N C E   M A N A G E M E N T   W O R K S H O P**

**OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS SERVICE  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

**USE THIS PAGE AS WORK SPACE**  
**Approved For Release 2001/08/08 : CIA-RDP74-00005R000200110001-0**

**The 4-S Formula**

**SHORTNESS**

**Workbook A**

1. DON'T MAKE A HABIT OF REPEATING WHAT IS SAID IN A LETTER YOU ANSWER

Instruction: Rewrite the following openings so that they are natural and to the point.

- (1) Reference is made to your letter of January 2, 1957, transmitting copies of correspondence prepared in your Examining Division, which you are desirous of having reviewed by our correspondence experts. We will be glad to have them make this review.
- (2) We have your letter requesting us to grant you permission to quote from the material in our recently published booklet "Improve Your Letters," which we are glad for you to do.
- (3) Receipt is acknowledged of your letter of January 4, 1957, in which you asked if our Mr. Smith could call at your office, at his convenience, to discuss our policies with you. We shall be glad to have him do this.
- (4) This letter acknowledges your request of January 7, 1957, for a copy of our pamphlet "Plain Letters," which is enclosed.

- (5) In your letter of January 2, 1957, you requested us to furnish you whatever material we have available which gives complete information about our new filing equipment. A circular containing such information is enclosed.

2. AVOID NEEDLESS WORDS AND NEEDLESS INFORMATION

Instruction: Rewrite the following sentences to eliminate the needless words and needless information.

- (1) I was born in the city of Bangor which is located in the state of Maine.
- (2) We take this opportunity to wish you success in your new employment.
- (3) This is to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of January 3, 1957.
- (4) The display of your entrance permit is mandatory.
- (5) We are enclosing a form which is for your signature.
- (6) We are wondering if sufficient time has passed so that you are in a position to indicate to us whether favorable action may now be taken on our recommendation for the reclassification of Miss Betty Smith, junior clerk-stenographer, GS-2, to assistant clerk-stenographer, GS-3.

3. BEWARE OF ROUNDABOUT PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Instruction: Strike out the roundabout prepositional phrases in the following sentences and substitute, as necessary, single prepositions or other parts of speech.

- (1) In the event of rain, the outdoor exhibit will be postponed.
- (2) We should conduct a survey in order to obtain accurate information.
- (3) You raised several questions with reference to our personnel policy.
- (4) The information was given to Mr. Black in view of the fact that he is the chairman of the Committee.
- (5) He was able to reach the isolated region by means of airplane.
- (6) The date of a letter is included for the purpose of quick reference.
- (7) In the matter of deciding whether there is a need for a guide-letter system, you should first make a volume test.
- (8) It is in the matter of the relations with your own staff that your major responsibilities are discharged.

4. WATCH OUT FOR NOUNS AND ADJECTIVES THAT DERIVE FROM VERBS

Instruction: Revise the following sentences to eliminate the nouns and adjectives that derive from verbs.

- (1) The administrative officer has the job of providing the executive leadership throughout the organization.
- (2) It was about three o'clock when we made the decision to give the man his release.

- (3) The Committee could not reach an agreement on the matter.
- (4) The officer gave a talk on the art of writing plain letters.
- (5) He made reference to their telephone conversation.
- (6) She took offense when her letter was criticized.
- (7) He held a conference with his assistant to determine what the promotion policy of the office should be.
- (8) Everyone should strive to develop a usage of good English.

5. DON'T QUALIFY YOUR STATEMENTS WITH IRRELEVANT "IFS"

Instruction: Rewrite the following paragraph, giving only essential information. This paragraph was written to an irate farmer who wrote that his crops were damaged when a power line was installed over his farm.

In reply to your letter of January 28, 1957, you are advised that Public Law -- provides that an individual, or his estate in the event of death, may, if application is made to this Commission within 90 days following the date of the damage alleged to have been sustained, or by June 30, 1957, whichever is the later date, and if such documentary evidence as may be required by the Commission is submitted, establish entitlement to reparation in an amount not exceeding the amount of the fair market value of the losses proved to have been sustained. Form X-220, which will supply all the information needed by the Commission, is enclosed for use in filing a claim for crop damages incident to the installation of the power line over the farm owned by you.

USE THIS PAGE AS WORK SPACE  
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Includes "The Fog Index"  
("A Simple Method of Measuring Reading Ease")

**THE**  
**4-S**  
**FORMULA**

**FOR**  
*simplicity*

**C O R R E S P O N D E N C E   M A N A G E M E N T   W O R K S H O P**

**OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS SERVICE  
GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

Revised August 1959

The 4-S Formula

SIMPLICITY

Workbook B

1. KNOW YOUR SUBJECT SO WELL YOU CAN DISCUSS IT CONFIDENTLY AND NATURALLY

Instruction: Rewrite the following paragraph in natural, simple terms.

Regarding Mr. Brown's interest in a position as guard at the White House, members of the White House Police are appointed from members of the Metropolitan Police Force and the U. S. Park Police Force from lists submitted by the officers in charge of such forces. We are enclosing for transmission to Mr. Brown an announcement of the past examination for Policeman for the Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D. C., and the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, and his particular attention is invited to the marked portion thereof which relates to residence.

2. USE SHORT WORDS, SHORT SENTENCES, AND SHORT PARAGRAPHS

a. Short Words

Instruction: Supply a short synonym for each of the following words.

category	_____	utilize	_____
partially	_____	render	_____
apparent	_____	compensation	_____
consequently	_____	correspondence	_____
furthermore	_____	contemplate	_____
consolidate	_____	accordingly	_____
objective	_____	explicit	_____

b. Short Sentences

Instruction: Rewrite the following sentences to shorten them.

- (1) Consideration is being given to this matter by our claims branch.
- (2) Our regional office has been instructed to be prepared for a visit from your representative.
- (3) There is a need in today's business for properly qualified correspondents.
- (4) Sign the enclosed card and drop it in the mailbox today.

c. Short Paragraphs

Instruction: By using diagonals, break the following material into short paragraphs.

We are sending you in today's mail our handbook on Guide Letters which you requested in your letter of January 2, 1957. We hope you will find it helpful and informative to your management analysts. We have another handbook entitled "Form Letters" which has been of considerable value to government officials desirous of developing or improving form letters in their agencies. Your generous remarks about the worth of our handbook Plain Letters are appreciated. We are glad that the publication has been received so favorably in the correspondence units in your organization.

3. BE COMPACT. DON'T SEPARATE CLOSELY RELATED PARTS OF SENTENCES

- a. Boil modifiers down, shortening the sentence as well as simplifying it.

Instruction: In the following sentences change clauses to phrases.

(1) They promised that they would reach a decision by Monday.

(2) I'll arrange so that you can see the demonstration.

Instruction: In the following sentences change clauses or phrases to single adjectives or adverbs.

(1) Men who are industrious will succeed.

(2) Could this be written in a different way?

Instruction: In the following sentences change long phrases to shorter ones.

(1) You can cut the costs of correspondence through the use of automatic typewriters.

(2) These are the rules to follow in the preparation of correspondence.

- b. Keep the key verb near its subject and object or within easy reading distance.

Instruction: Rewrite the following sentences to place the main verb near the subject or the object.

(1) Mr. Jones, when he received the report, went directly to the office.

(2) He offered, as he left the committee meeting, to outline the proposed report the next day.

- c. Don't try to say too much in one sentence.

Instruction: Indicate how you would break the following material into shorter sentences.

I should appreciate your letting me know what your decision is so that I can send the report to Mr. Smith in our Washington office, requesting more information.

- d. Keep an unmistakable kinship between the modifier and the modified.

Instruction: Rewrite the following sentences, placing the modifier near the word it modifies.

(1) The date is easier to find by being placed in the upper right of the page.

- (2) I said when the meeting was over that I would go.

4. TIE YOUR THOUGHTS TOGETHER SO YOUR READER CAN FOLLOW YOU FROM ONE TO ANOTHER WITHOUT GETTING LOST

Instruction: Here are three sentences followed by several independent clauses, each of which should be introduced by a different conjunction (guidepost). Place the correct conjunction in the blank space provided.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| (1) We understand there are no surplus buildings at General Field...        | _____ GSA has some for sale in the area.                                  |
|   | _____ we suggest you consider building your own hangars.                  |
|   | _____ we are moving our administrative staff to Richmond.                 |
| (2) It is the policy of GSA to release factual information to the public... | _____ we are sending you a report of the Blank case which you requested.  |
|   | _____ we cannot send you a report until all the facts have been verified. |
| (3) The employee was requested to report on Monday for an interview...      | _____ he canceled his dental appointment for Monday morning.              |
|   | _____ his workweek will not begin until Tuesday.                          |
|   | _____ he was told to bring proof of residence.                            |

## FOG INDEX CHART

(Based on Robert Gunning's Fog Index Formula)

AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A SENTENCE																DIFFICULT READING RANGE
	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	
40	24	23	23	22	22	22	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	College graduate
39	23	23	22	22	22	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	
38	23	22	22	22	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	
37	22	22	22	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	
36	22	22	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	
35	22	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	
34	21	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	
33	21	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	
32	20	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	
31	20	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	
30	20	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	College sophomore
29	19	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	
28	19	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	
27	18	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	
26	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	
25	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	
24	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	
23	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	
22	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	
21	16	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	
20	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	College freshman
19	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	
18	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	
17	14	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	
16	14	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	
15	14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	
14	13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	
13	13	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	
12	12	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	7	
11	12	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	7	6	
10	12	11	11	10	10	10	9	9	8	8	8	7	7	6	6	High-school senior
																High-school junior
																High-school sophomore
																High-school freshman
																Eighth grade
																Seventh grade
																Sixth grade

NOTE: FOR RANGES NOT COVERED BY THIS TABLE FIND THE FOG INDEX BY  
USING THE METHOD ON REVERSE.

## A SIMPLE METHOD OF MEASURING READING EASE

(Based on Robert Gunning's Fog Index Formula)

To find the Fog Index of a piece of writing, follow these steps:

1. Choose a sample of 100 words or more. Samples should be free from quotes from other writers.
2. Divide the number of words in the sample by the number of sentences. This gives you the **AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A SENTENCE**.

### EXAMPLE

Number of words in the sample.....	118
Number of sentences.....	8
<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A SENTENCE</b> .....	14.7
	(or 15)

3. Divide the number of words of three or more syllables by the number of words in the sample. This gives you the **PERCENT OF DIFFICULT WORDS**.

### EXAMPLE

Number of words of three or more syllables.....	15
Number of words in the sample.....	118
<b>PERCENT OF DIFFICULT WORDS</b> .....	12.7
	(or 13)

4. Add the **AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A SENTENCE** to the **PERCENT OF DIFFICULT WORDS**.

### EXAMPLE

<b>AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A SENTENCE</b> .....	15
<b>PERCENT OF DIFFICULT WORDS</b> .....	13
<b>TOTAL</b> .....	28

5. Multiply this total by 0.4 to give you the Fog Index of the sample.

### EXAMPLE

28 times 0.4 equals a Fog Index of.....	11.2
	(or 11)

The general public can easily understand a Fog Index of 12 or less. A higher Fog Index means you are in danger of being ignored or misunderstood.

The table on the back of this page does most of the figuring for you. All you have to do is find the **AVERAGE NUMBER OF WORDS IN A SENTENCE** in the left column, and the **PERCENT OF DIFFICULT WORDS** in the bottom legend. Where these two rows of figures converge, in the body of the table, you will find the correct Fog Index.





**THE**  
**4-S**  
**FORMULA**

**FOR**  
**STRENGTH**

**C O R R E S P O N D E N C E   M A N A G E M E N T   W O R K S H O P**  
**OFFICE OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT**  
**NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS SERVICE**  
**GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

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1. USE CONCRETE, SPECIFIC WORDS

Instruction: Rewrite the following paragraph in a simple, direct style using as many concrete, specific words as possible to replace vague, weak ones.

Under certain circumstances, disabled veterans may be entitled to consideration as 10-point preference claimants in applying for civil service examinations conducted by the Commission. Examinations may be reopened for 10-point preference claimants. The classes of persons entitled to such preference are described in the marked paragraph of the enclosed Form 2867 which contains a list of positions for which examinations may be reopened. We are including an announcement of the past examination for Foreman of Laborers (Departmental Service) which may be of interest to your husband. If he comes within one of the classes of persons entitled to 10-point preference and wishes to apply for entrance to the next reopened examinations for any of the positions listed in the Form 2867 or covered by the enclosed examination announcement, he should advise this office, referring to the titles of the examinations of interest, and arrangements will be made to furnish him with application forms.

Instruction: Supply a more exact or vivid word for each of the following general terms.

area	_____
organization	_____
measure (noun)	_____
bone	_____
crime	_____
writing (noun)	_____
executive	_____
disease	_____
materiel	_____
building (noun)	_____

2. USE MORE ACTIVE VERBS

Instruction: Rewrite the following sentences, using the active voice to tell who . . . does . . . what.

(1) The meeting **was** addressed by Mr. Thorpe.

(2) John Henry **was** elected chairman by the committee.

(3) Your paper **will** be read by Edward Raymond at the next meeting of the committee.

(4) Consideration was being given to this matter by our executive officer.

(5) It is desired by Mr. Brown that I call this to your attention.

(6) This handbook was prepared by us to aid our stenographers.

Instruction: Rewrite the following sentences, using the passive voice -

To indicate that the recipient of the action is more important in the writer's mind than the doer.

(1) The printing office placed the schedule for the workshop on page one of the booklet.

To gain needed emphasis by naming the act or the doer at the end of the sentence.

(2) The Secretary himself approves measures for overcoming the manpower shortage.

To omit the doer when he is not known or may not be named.

(3) \_\_\_\_\_ neither supported nor opposed the measure.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_ made a report of the types of letters used in GSA.

3. DON'T EXPLAIN YOUR ANSWER BEFORE GIVING IT. GIVE ANSWERS STRAIGHTAWAY; THEN EXPLAIN IF NECESSARY

Instruction: Rewrite the following paragraph, giving the answer and then the explanation.

In reply to your application for a raise in salary, you are informed that we recently added two employees to our staff for the purpose of handling the typing work of the office, and, to pay the salaries of these people, we have had to tie up all of this year's excess funds. Then, too, no increase will be made in next year's budget for salaries. We regret that because of the limitations on our budget for salaries we are unable to increase your salary.

4. DON'T HEDGE

Instruction: In the following sentences, draw a line through the hedging words and phrases.

- (1) As a rule, an enclosure with a directive is labeled to associate it with the directive of which it is a part.
- (2) Normally, the original of a letter is prepared on bond paper.
- (3) In a message, punctuation is generally used only when needed for clarity.
- (4) It appears to me that your proposal is acceptable.
- (5) The secretary says that a seemingly excessive number of carbon copies of letters are made.
- (6) From all indications, the campaign was an outstanding success.

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### SPEEDING THE WORD

Distance and time separate Navy top management from the far-flung Operating Forces and the Shore Establishment. To make top-level decisions effective, the twin handicaps of miles and hours must be overcome by use of modern technological devices that annihilate distance and measure time in terms of the speed of light.

Under present conventional methods, departmental directives and similar publications are printed in Washington. High-priority material is delivered to widely dispersed activities by courier or by commercial carriers at premium rates. Routine material requires an average of 2 weeks for delivery by bulk mail.

New electronic equipment is being perfected which will permit "the word" to be sent out economically by telegraph or radio and received overseas in the form of copy ready for immediate photographing, printing, and local distribution.

By eliminating the time now required to transport printed material from Washington to the field, high-priority directives and publications will be in local distribution channels at even the most distant overseas points in 24 hours. Delivery of routine material will require only a few days instead of several weeks.

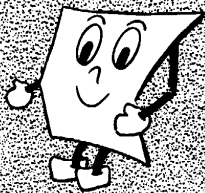
Under this plan existing transmission facilities will be linked to recently developed composing and recording machines. Material typed in Washington will then be sent via wire or radio and received at overseas points ready for printing on presses which are already available.

A Navy Department Publication



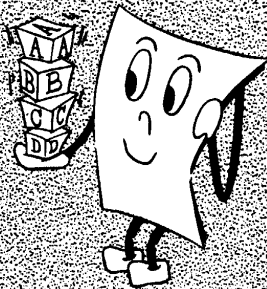
## WHAT MAKES A LETTER PLAIN ?

## THE 4S FORMULA



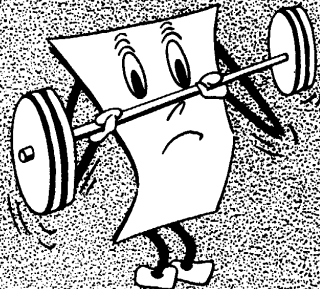
### A. SHORTNESS

1. Don't unnecessarily repeat inquiry
2. Avoid needless words, information
3. Shorten prepositional phrases
4. Watch "verbal" nouns, adjectives
5. Limit qualifying statements



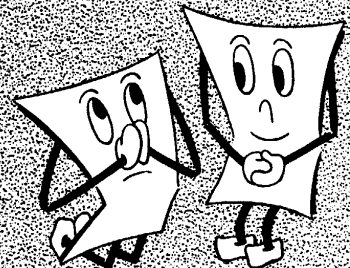
### B. SIMPLICITY

1. Know your subject
2. Use short words, sentences, paragraphs
3. Be compact
4. Tie thoughts together



### C. STRENGTH

1. Use specific words
2. Use active verbs
3. Give answer, then explain
4. Don't hedge



### D. SINCERITY

1. Be human
2. Admit mistakes
3. Limit intensives and emphatics
4. Don't be servile or arrogant